The RNBCs are subjected to inspections either every year or once in two years depending on their deposit size.

The Peerless General Finance and Investment Co. Ltd. was last inspected with reference to its financial position as on March 31, 2001 between December 3, 2001 and March 11, 2002. The last inspection revealed some improvements in certain areas of working of the company. The company maintained the minimum requirement of 80 per cent investments in liquid asets as on 31 March 2001.

The operating profit of the company increased from Rs. 135.45 crore for the year ended March 31, 2000 to Rs. 297.03 crore for the year ended March 31, 2001. The net profit of the company worked out to Rs. 34.47 crore for the year ended March 31, 2001 as compared to net loss of Rs. 386.43 crore for the year ended March 31, 2000.

Printing of currency notes

2694. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Norms for currency notes given go-by," appearing in 'Deccan Herald', dated 11th November, 2002;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what is the quantum of currency notes that is proposed to be printed, the revenue implication in this transaction and the number of overseas companies evincing interest in this transaction; and

(d) what measures are proposed to be taken to bring about transparency in the transaction and to make the currency notes contra-counterfeit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The stated news item refers to some recommendations made by the High Level Committee (HLC) to prevent counterfeiting of Indian banknotes and levels charge against the Ministry that efforts are being made to dilute some security features with a view to favouring American and British Companies at the cost of other European Companies. It also

makes a reference to some previous tenders and the procedure being followed to procure banknote paper.

(c) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given an indent to produce and supply 15.8 billion pieces, 16.8 billion pieces and 16.2 billion pieces of banknotes during 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively. It is not possible at this time to indicate the revenue implication or the number of overseas companies since the same would depend upon the response received to global bids to procure banknote paper and other raw materials.

(d) It is stated that the Government is concerned about counterfeiting of Indian currency notes and all efforts are being made to make the task of counterfeiters as difficult as possible. It is further stated that all transactions relating to printing of banknotes are being carried out in a transparent manner keeping in view, the national security considerations.

Representation from Zinc Metal Industries

2695. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representations from zinc metal producing industries;

(b) if so, what are their problems; and

(c) the steps taken to resolve their problems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In their representation, the zinc metal producing industries have requested for reduction of import duty on zinc. In their post-budget (2002-03) representation, restoration of the basic customs duty on Zinc to the pre-budget level of 35% and reduction of the customs duty on zinc concentrates to 0% have been requested.

(c) The representation are dealt with, in accordance with the existing instructions and policies of the Government. During the Budget 2002-03, basic customs duty on non-ferrous metals was reduced as per Government's policy, to attain a two rate custom duty structure (10% and 20%) by 2004-05 and basic custom duty on zinc was reduced from